

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheet makes changes to Figs. 7 and 8 and replaces the original sheet with Figs. 7 and 8.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this amendment, the specification and drawings are amended. Claims 6-9 are provisionally withdrawn from consideration.

Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, makes final the Restriction Requirement. As such, claims 6-9 are provisionally withdrawn from consideration. Independent claim 6 recites an information medium manufactured by the steps according to claim 1. As such, upon finding of claim 1 allowable for the reasons indicated below, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder and examination of claims 6-9. The information medium according to claim 6 cannot be manufactured by any other process other than that specifically recited, which is the same process comprising all the features specifically recited regarding the method of claim 1.

The Office Action, on page 2, objects to the specification, and specifically the Abstract, for certain informalities. Applicants amend the Abstract with the inclusion of the attached amended Abstract to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 3, objects to the drawings for an informality. Specifically, the Office Action indicates that Figs. 7 and 8 should be designated with a legend. The attached Replacement Drawing Sheet made changes to Figs. 7 and 8 by adding a legend, thereby obviating the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 4, rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,562,550 to Takahata et al. (hereinafter "Takahata") in view of JP-A-04-263140 (hereinafter "JP '140"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takahata teaches preparation of an optical disk master including a step of treating a photoresist layer with a surfactant prior to an exposing step of the photoresist layer or between

an exposing step and a developing step of the photoresist layer (Abstract). With reference to Figs. 1E and 1F and col. 5, lines 58-64 of Takahata, the Office Action asserts that the preliminary treatment feature positively recited in independent claim 1 is considered to be taught, or at least to have been suggested, by Takahata. The reference to any treatment steps indicated in Takahata regards treatment with a surfactant such as, for example, a one percent solution of an ampholitic surfactant in pure water by spin rinsing for 30 seconds (col. 5, lines 58-60). After this treatment, Takahata teaches that the photoresist layer is washed with water by spin rinsing with ultra pure water for 90 seconds (col. 5, lines 62-64). There is no teaching, nor suggestion, of providing a metal catalyst on a surface of said uneven pattern, activating said metal catalyst, and then washing the surface of said uneven pattern on which said metal catalyst is provided with a liquid, as is positively recited in the pending claims.

The claims recite, among other features, providing a metal catalyst on a surface of said uneven pattern, activating said metal catalyst, and then washing the surface of said uneven pattern on which said metal catalyst is provided with a liquid, as preliminary treatments to the step of forming said thin metal film on said photoresist layer. As such, these steps comprise steps in the method that are not even reasonably suggested by the surfactant treatment of Takahata. There is no suggestion of providing a metal catalyst on a surface and activating said metal catalyst. Additionally, these steps in the claims occur after the development of the uneven layer, i.e. not either prior to the exposing step or between the exposing step and the developing step, but rather after the developing step is complete.

For at least these reasons, Takahata cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the features that the Office Action alleges Takahata teaches. Specifically, Takahata cannot reasonably be considered to teach the above recited features that are positively recited in claims 1, 3, 5 and 6.

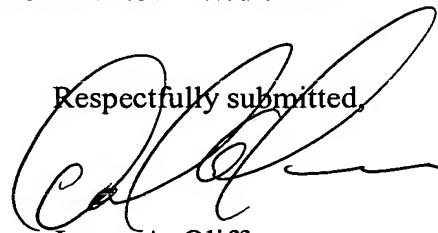
JP '140 is applied only regarding a step of forming a light absorption layer on a glass substrate. As such, JP '140 is not applied in a manner that would overcome the above-identified shortfall in the application of Takahata to the subject matter of the pending claims.

For at least these reasons, a combination of Takahata and JP '140 cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested the combinations of all the features recited in at least independent claims 1, 3 and 5. Additionally, claims 2 and 4 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by a combination of Takahata and JP '140 for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claims, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahata in view of JP '140 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.



Respectfully submitted,
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JAO:DAT/axl

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Amended Abstract
Replacement Drawing Sheet (Figs. 7 and 8)

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